

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE BYLAWS**  
**AS AMENDED JUNE 2013**

*Article I*  
**Name and Office**

**Sec. 1 Name.** The name of this organization shall be the League of Women Voters of New York State, hereinafter referred to in these bylaws as “LWVNYS.” The LWVNYS is an integral part of the League of Women Voters of the United States, hereinafter referred to in these bylaws as “LWVUS”.

*Article II*  
**Purposes and Policy**

**Sec. 1 Purposes.** The purposes of the LWVNYS shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

**Sec. 2 Political Policy.** The LWVNYS shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

*Article III*  
**Membership**

**Sec. 1 Eligibility.** Any person who subscribes to the purposes and policy of the LWVNYS shall be eligible for membership.

**Sec. 2 Types of Membership.**

- a. Voting members. Citizens at least 18 years of age who join the LWVNYS at any level shall be voting members at all levels of League.
  - i. individuals who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other local League; those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or may be state members-at-large;
  - ii. those who have been members of the LWVUS for 50 years or more shall be honorary life members excused from the payment of dues
- b. Associate Members. All others who join the LWVNYS shall be associate members. Associate members are non-voting members.

*Article IV*  
**Officers**

**Sec. 1 Enumeration, Election and Term.** The officers of the LWVNYS shall be a president, a first vice-president, with up to but no more than three additional vice-presidents, and either a secretary and a treasurer or a combined position of secretary/treasurer. The number of vice-presidents and whether the offices of secretary and treasurer shall be combined shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee. Any of those offices may not be eliminated or combined until the term of an elected officer is concluded. The Officers shall be elected by the convention and hold office until the conclusion of the next convention or until their successors have been elected and qualified.

**Sec. 2 Qualifications.** Only voting members in the state of New York shall be elected or appointed to serve as officers or directors of the LWVNYS.

**Sec. 3 President.** The president shall preside at all meetings of the LWVNYS and of the board of directors, hereinafter referred to as “the board”, unless the president is absent or designates someone else to preside. In the absence or disability of the treasurer, the president may sign or endorse checks, drafts, and notes. The president shall be, ex officio, a member of all committees except the nominating committee and have such usual powers of supervision and management as may pertain to the office of the president and perform other duties designated by the board.

**Sec. 4 Vice-presidents.** In the event of the absence of the president, the first vice-president, or any of the vice-presidents, in order of rank, shall assume that office until the president’s return. If the board declares the office of president vacant, the first vice-president shall assume the office. If the first vice-president is unable to serve as president, any of the vice-presidents, in order of rank, shall assume that office until the next convention. In the event that none of the vice-presidents is able to serve in this capacity, the board shall elect one of its elected members to fill the vacancy. The vice-presidents shall perform such other duties as the president and board may designate.

**Sec. 5 Secretary.** The secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, minutes of convention, council, and meetings of the board; shall notify all officers and directors of their election; shall sign with the president all contracts and other instruments when so authorized by the board; and shall perform such other functions as the president and board shall direct.

**Sec. 6 Treasurer.** The treasurer shall, at the direction of the president and the board, perform such financial oversight of the professional staff of the organization, as is appropriate under the circumstances, and such other duties as may customarily pertain to the office; and shall arrange for an annual audit of the books by a certified public accountant.

*Article V*  
Board

**Sec. 1 Number, Selection, and Term.** The board shall consist of the officers of the LWVNYS, up to five but not less than three elected directors, and up to four appointed directors. The number of elected directors shall be recommended by the Nominating Committee. The elected directors shall be elected by the convention and shall serve until the conclusion of the next convention or until their successors have been elected and qualified. The elected members of the board shall appoint such additional directors, not exceeding four, as they deem necessary to carry on the work of the LWVNYS. The terms of office of the appointed directors shall expire concurrently with the terms of office of the elected directors.

**Sec. 2 Absences and Vacancies.**

- a. **Absences.** In the event that a board member is absent from two consecutive meetings of the board, without excuse accepted as satisfactory by the directors, that position may be declared vacant by a majority vote of the remaining board members.
- b. **Vacancies.** A board position shall be vacant in the event a board member dies or resigns, a position is declared vacant pursuant to Section 2a of this Article, or a board member is determined to have engaged in misconduct by three-fifths of the remaining board.
- c. Any vacancy in the board other than in the presidency may be filled until the next convention by a majority vote of the remaining members of the board.

**Sec. 3 Powers and Duties.**

- a. The board shall have full charge of the property and fiscal business of the LWVNYS with full power and authority to manage and conduct the same, subject to the instructions of the convention.
- b. The board shall plan and direct the work necessary to carry out the program on state governmental matters as adopted by the convention.
- c. The board shall accept responsibility delegated to it by the board of the LWVUS for:
  - i. the organization and development of local Leagues;
  - ii. carrying out of a program;
  - iii. providing assistance to the local Leagues in obtaining funds to further the work of a local League or the LWVNYS; and
  - iv. guidance of intrastate inter-League organizations hereinafter referred to as ILOs.
- d. The board may create member-at-large (hereinafter referred to as MAL) units, and establish rules and regulations for their operations.
- e. The board shall create and designate such special committees as it may deem necessary.
- f. The board may appoint an executive committee consisting of no fewer than five members of the board. The executive committee shall exercise such power and authority as may be delegated to it by the board and shall report to the board, at the earliest opportunity, on all actions taken by it between regular meetings of the board.
- g. The consent of the board and the signature of two officers shall be necessary to endorse, transfer, and deliver any certificate of stock, bond or other security or real property in the name and on behalf of the LWVNYS. The board may delegate such authority to sign or endorse checks, drafts, and notes as it may from time to time see fit.

**Sec. 4 Regular Meetings.** There shall be at least two regular meetings of the board annually. At the direction of the president, at least two weeks before each regular meeting, each board member shall be sent a written notice giving the time and place of such meeting.

**Sec. 5 Special Meetings.** The president may call special meetings of the board, and/or shall call a special meeting upon the written request of five members of the board. Members of the board shall be notified of the time and place of special meetings by fax, e-mail, or letter sent at least six days prior to such meeting. During convention or council, however, the president may, or upon the request of five members of the board shall, call a special meeting of the board by giving members of the board a written notice of the time and place of said meeting.

**Sec. 6 Quorum.** A majority of the members of the board shall constitute a quorum and a majority of the members in attendance at any board meeting shall, in the presence of a quorum, decide its action. Any member of the board may participate in a meeting by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment that allows all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other at the same time; participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting.

**Sec. 7 Compensation.** Directors shall not receive compensation for services rendered to or on behalf of the LWVNYS except that members of the board may be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred on behalf of the LWVNYS upon presentation to the treasurer or secretary/treasurer of reasonable detailed receipts thereof.

*Article VI*  
Recognition of Local and Provisional Leagues

**Sec. 1 Local Leagues.** Local Leagues are those Leagues which have been so recognized by the LWVUS.

**Sec. 2 Recognition of Local Leagues.** The LWVNYS board shall recommend to the LWVUS board recognition of any group in the state which fulfills recognition requirements for local Leagues as adopted by the national convention. When such recognition is granted, the local Leagues shall become an integral part of the LWVUS and the LWVNYS.

**Sec. 3 Withdrawal of Recognition.** When a local League recurrently fails to fulfill recognition requirements, the board shall recommend to the LWVUS board that recognition be withdrawn. Final action rests with the LWVUS board. All funds held by such dissolved Leagues shall be paid to the LWVNYS after payment of all liabilities.

**Sec. 4 Member-at-Large Units.** When a group of people in a community in which no local League exists wishes to form a League of Women Voters, it may be organized into a Member-at-Large unit by the board under the requirements adopted by the convention of the LWVUS. It shall remain a MAL unit until such time as it has fulfilled the recognition requirements for local Leagues, or until its recognition has been withdrawn. All funds held by a MAL unit from which recognition has been withdrawn shall be paid to the LWVNYS.

**Sec. 5 Inter-League Organizations-ILOs.** Members enrolled in local Leagues may organize ILOs in order to promote the purposes of the League and to take action on county, metropolitan or regional governmental matters. The LWVNYS board shall recommend to the LWVUS board that such ILO be recognized, provided requirements adopted by the national convention have been met. The board has responsibility for the guidance of ILOs. In the event of recurrent failure of an ILO to fulfill these requirements, the board shall recommend to the LWVUS board that it withdraw recognition from such ILO. All funds held by an ILO from which recognition has been withdrawn shall be prorated among its member Leagues.

*Article VII*  
Financial Administration

**Sec. 1 Fiscal Year.** The fiscal year of the LWVNYS shall be from July 1 to June 30 of the following year.

**Sec. 2 Financial Support.** Each local League shall make an annual per-member and household payment to the LWVNYS in the amount to be determined by a 3/5 vote of those present and voting at each convention. Local Leagues shall be excused from making per-member payments for paid life or honorary life members. Member-at-Large Units shall pay dues to the LWVNYS in an amount to be determined by the LWVNYS board.

**Sec. 3 Budget.** The board shall submit to the convention or council for adoption a proposed budget for the ensuing year. This proposed budget shall provide for the support of the LWVNYS. A copy of the proposed budget shall be sent to the president of each local League and ILO and each MAL unit chair at least six weeks in advance of the convention or council. A budget shall be adopted by a majority vote, except that the per-member-payment shall be approved as provided in section 2 of this article. The practice of preparation and implementation of a two-year budget may be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the delegates present at convention. Should a two-year budget be implemented, in the interim year, the board shall report to the delegates at council on the status of the finances of the organization and budgetary items.

**Sec. 4 Budget Committee.** The budget shall be prepared by a committee which shall be appointed for that purpose by the board at least four months in advance of the convention or council. The budget committee shall consist of no fewer than five members including a chair and the treasurer. The majority of the members of this committee, including the chair, shall not be members of the state board. Except for the treasurer, each member of the budget committee shall be from a different local League.

**Sec. 5 Distribution of Funds on Dissolution.** In the event of the dissolution of the LWVNYS, all moneys and securities which may at the time be owned by or under the control of the LWVNYS shall be paid to the LWVUS after the state board has paid or made provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the LWVNYS. All other property of whatsoever nature, whether real, personal, or mixed which may at the time be owned or under the control of the LWVNYS shall be disposed of to such a person, organization, or corporation for such public, charitable or educational use and purposes as the state board in its discretion may designate.

**Sec. 6 Indemnification.** Every LWVNYS director, officer or specified representative of the LWVNYS shall be indemnified against all expenses and liabilities, including counsel fees, reasonably incurred or imposed upon them in connection with any proceeding to which they may be made a party, or in which they may become involved by reason of being or having been a director, officer or specified representative, or any settlement thereof, whether the person is a director, officer or specified representative at the time such expenses are incurred, except in such cases wherein the individual is adjudged guilty of willful misfeasance or malfeasance in the performance of duties. The foregoing right of indemnification shall be in addition to and exclusive of all other rights to which the indemnified may be entitled. Indemnification will be up to the amount insured.

*Article VIII*  
Convention

**Sec. 1 Place, Date, and Call.** A convention of the LWVNYS shall be held biennially. The time and place of the convention shall be determined by the board. At the direction of the president, a call for the convention shall be sent to the president of each local League and ILO, and chair of each MAL unit not less than three months prior to the opening date of the convention fixed in said call. Thereafter the board may advance or postpone the opening date of the convention not more than two weeks from the date fixed in the first call. A final call for the convention shall be sent by the president to the president of each local League, ILO, and to the chair of each MAL unit, at least 30 days before convention.

**Sec. 2 Composition.** The convention shall consist of the delegates of the local Leagues, ILOs and MAL units, as provided in section 4 of this article, and the members of the board.

**Sec. 3 Qualifications of Delegates and Voting.** All delegates shall be voting members of the League. Each delegate representing a local League, ILO, or MAL unit shall be entitled to vote only if that League, ILO or MAL unit has met its per-member-payment responsibilities. The LWVNYS board may make an exception in the case of proven hardship. No delegate shall be entitled to more than one vote, and absentee or proxy voting shall not be permitted. Final determination of a delegate's qualifications or credentials shall be made by the convention.

**Sec. 4 Representation.** The members of the LWVUS who are organized into recognized local Leagues, ILOs, and MAL units in the state of New York shall be entitled to voting representation at the convention as follows: each local League shall be represented by the president or an alternate. In addition to the president or alternate, each local League is entitled to one delegate for the first 40 members. Leagues having more than 40 members shall be entitled to one delegate for each additional 40 members or major fraction thereof. Membership numbers will be

determined by the number indicated in the official LWVUS membership count report for the year of the convention. Each recognized ILO shall be entitled to one voting delegate to be elected by its board of directors. Each MAL unit shall be entitled to one voting delegate to be chosen by its members.

**Sec. 5 Authorization for Action.** The convention shall consider and authorize a program for action; shall elect officers, directors, the chair and two members of the nominating committee; shall adopt a budget for the ensuing year; and shall transact such other business as may be presented.

**Sec. 6 Quorum.** A quorum shall consist of a majority of the delegates registered at the convention provided that not less than one-half of the local Leagues are represented at convention.

*Article IX*  
Council

**Sec. 1 Place, Date and Call.** A meeting of the council shall be held in the interim year between conventions, approximately 12 months after the preceding convention. The time and place of the meeting shall be determined by the board. At the direction of the LWVNYS president, a formal call shall be sent to the president of each local League and ILO, and to the chair of each MAL unit. This call shall be no more than 50 nor less than 10 days before a council meeting. Council business may be conducted by mail, if so determined by the board. A special meeting of the council by approved forum may be called by a majority of the local Leagues, or by the President upon the vote of a majority of the board.

**Sec. 2 Composition.** Delegates to council, conducted by approved forum, shall be comprised of the board, each of whom shall have one vote, the president of each ILO or an alternate, the president of each local League or an alternate, and the chair of each MAL unit or an alternate. The delegates representing each ILO, local League, and the chair of each MAL, shall each have two votes at council. Local Leagues with membership over 500 shall be entitled to one additional delegate at a council meeting. At council conducted by approved forum, those delegates of local Leagues with membership over 500 shall each be entitled to one additional vote, making a total of three.

**Sec. 3 Qualifications of Delegates.** Each delegate shall be a voting member of the LWVNYS.

**Sec. 4 Authorization for Action.** The council shall consider program, methods of operation and the financial status of the organization, including a proposed or ongoing budget, as presented by the LWVNYS board. The council is authorized to make such modifications of the program and, if applicable, an ongoing budget, as shall be necessary to meet altered conditions, provided that notice of proposed modifications shall have been sent by the LWVNYS board to the president of each local League and ILO, and to the chair of each MAL unit, at least six weeks in advance of the meeting of the council. A two-thirds majority of the delegates present and voting at a council meeting shall be necessary to adopt the changes. A two-thirds majority of the votes cast by delegates to council conducted by mail shall be necessary to adopt such changes. The council shall transact such other business as shall be presented.

**Sec. 5 Quorum.** A quorum for the transaction of business at a council meeting shall consist of a majority of the delegates registered at the council. A quorum for the transaction of business at council conducted by mail shall be not less than one-half of the local Leagues.

*Article X*  
Nominations and Elections

**Sec. 1 Nominating Committee.** The nominating committee shall consist of five members, two of whom shall be members of the board. The chair and two members who shall not be members of the board shall be elected by the convention. Nomination for these offices shall be made by the current nominating committee. Further nominations may be made from the floor of the convention. The other members of the committee shall be appointed by the board immediately after the convention. Vacancies occurring in the nominating committee shall be filled by the board.

**Sec. 2 Suggestions by Local Leagues and MAL Units.** The nominating committee chair shall solicit from the president of each local League, ILO, and the chair of each MAL unit, suggestions for nominations for the offices to be filled.

**Sec. 3 Suggestions for Nominations.** Suggestions for nominations shall be sent to the chair of the nominating committee at least six months before convention. Any member may send suggestions to the chair of the nominating committee.

**Sec. 4 Decisions of the Committee.** Decisions of the committee shall be by the concurrence of the majority of the full committee.

**Sec. 5 Report of the Nominating Committee and Nominations from the Floor.** The report of the nominating committee of its nominations for officers, directors, and the chair and two members of the succeeding nominating committee shall be sent to the president of each local League and ILO, and to the chair of each MAL unit, six weeks before the convention. The report shall be presented on the first day of the convention. Immediately following the presentation of this report, nominations may be made from the floor by any member of the convention, provided that the consent of the nominee has been secured.

**Sec. 6 Election.** The election shall be under the direction of an election committee appointed by the president on the first day of the convention. The election shall be by ballot, except that when there is but one nominee for each office, it may be by voice vote. A majority vote of those present and qualified to vote and voting shall constitute an election.

*Article XI*  
Program

**Sec. 1 Principles.** The Principles adopted by the national convention and supported by the League as a whole constitute the authorization for the adoption of the LWVNYS program.

**Sec. 2 Program.** The program of the LWVNYS shall consist of:  
a. action to implement the Principles, and  
b. concerted study and action on those state governmental issues chosen by the LWVNYS convention.

**Sec. 3 Convention Action.** The convention shall act upon the program using the following procedures:  
a. Local League, ILO and MAL unit boards may make recommendations for a program to the board at least three months prior to the convention.

b. The board shall consider the recommendations and shall formulate a proposed program which shall be submitted to the president of each local League and ILO, and to the chair of each MAL unit, at least six weeks prior to the convention.

c. A majority vote shall be required for the adoption of the program proposed by the LWVNYS board.

d. Any recommendation for the program submitted to the board at least three months before the convention, but not proposed by the board, may be adopted by the convention, provided consideration is ordered by a majority vote and the proposal for adoption receives a three-fifths vote.

**Sec. 4 Council Action.** The council may modify or change the program as provided in Article IX.

**Sec. 5 Member Action.** Members may act in the name of the LWVNYS only when authorized to do so by the board.

**Sec. 6 Local League, ILO and MAL Unit Action.** Local Leagues, ILOs, and MAL units may take action on state governmental matters only when authorized to do so by the LWVNYS board. Local Leagues, ILOs, and MAL units must act only in conformity with, or not contrary to, the position taken by the LWVNYS.

#### *Article XII*

#### National Convention and Council

**Sec. 1 National Convention.** The board shall elect the number of delegates to the national convention that was allotted to the LWVNYS under the provisions of the bylaws of the LWVUS.

**Sec. 2 National Council.** The board shall elect the number of delegates to the national council that was allotted to the LWVNYS under the provisions of the bylaws of the LWVUS.

#### *Article XIII*

#### Parliamentary Authority

**Sec. 1 Parliamentary Authority.** The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the LWVNYS in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws.

#### *Article XIV*

#### Amendments

These bylaws may be amended at any biennial convention by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present and voting. Proposed changes shall be submitted to the board at least three months prior to a convention. All such proposed amendments shall be sent by the board to the president of each local League and ILO, and to the chair of each MAL unit, at least six weeks prior to the convention, together with the recommendations of the board. The presidents of all local Leagues shall notify the members of their respective Leagues of the proposed amendments. The failure of a local president to give such notice or failure of any member to receive such notice shall not invalidate amendments to the bylaws adopted at any convention.